

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OIC-02
AID-05 /090 W
-----123709 061632Z /45

O R 061515Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6956
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 29493

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINA
REFUGEES

REF: STATE 219748

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1. EMBOFF MET WITH JEAN PAOLINI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR TO
CLAUDE CHAYET, FOR REFUGEE MATTERS, TO DISCUSS FRENCH
VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINA RE-
FUGEES. PAOLINI ALREADY HAD REPORT FROM FRENCH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON ON BRIEFING BY DAS CARLIN OF AUGUST 28
(STATE 219748). EMBOFF DREW FROM STATE 215855 TO
PRESENT OUR VIEWS OF "BRIEFING" SESSION IN KUALA LUMPUR

AND POSSIBLE SUBSEQUENT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

2. PAOLINI SAID FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD NOT YET REACHED A POSITION ON EITHER MEETING. HE NOTED THAT ANY MEETING HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR DEALING WITH INDOCHINA REFUGEES WAS GOING TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY NOTWITHSTANDING EFFORTS TO KEEP MEETING IN A "LOW KEY." PAOLINI SAID THAT FRANCE HAS BEEN SOUNDED OUT FOR ITS VIEWS BY THE US AND AUSTRALIA, BUT STILL HAS HEARD NOTHING FROM THE UNHCR ON THE SUBJECT OF A MEETING. HE SAID FRANCE WOULD NORMALLY EXPECT TO BE CONSULTED BY THE UNHCR ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING ON INDOCHINA REFUGEES BEFORE A DECISION WAS REACHED ON WHETHER OR NOT IT SHOULD BE HELD.

3. PAOLINI SAID THAT GOF WILL WANT TO HAVE A FAIRLY GOOD IDEA OF WHAT CONCRETE RESULTS COULD COME OUT OF THE MEETINGS BEFORE AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE. THERE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE A GOOD TURNOUT FROM OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES AS WELL AS FROM OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE ACTIVE REFUGEE PROGRAMS. PAOLINI SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING AN AGENDA FOR THE PROPOSED KUALA LUMPUR MEETING, NOTING THAT THREE "CRITICAL NEEDS" MENTIONED PARA ONE REFTEL WOULD FORM A GOOD BASIS FOR DEVELOPING AGENDA. PAOLINI EXPRESSED GRAVE DOUBTS THAT THERE IS ENOUGH TIME BEFORE

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KUALA LUMPUR MEETING (ASSUMING IT IS TO BE HELD SEPT. 20-21) TO DEVELOP A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM.

4. PAOLINI THEN WENT ON IN AN "UNOFFICIAL SWAPPING OF VIEWS" TO GIVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT FRENCH WOULD CONSIDER A USEFUL AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ANY INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON REFUGEES. HE SAID CONCRETE RESULTS MUST BE OBTAINED IF THE MEETING IS NOT TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO HAVE ESTABLISHED A "MINIMUM SET OF RULES" WHICH WOULD BE ADOPTED UNDER THE UNHCR. THESE RULES WOULD REQUIRE NATIONS TO TAKE SPECIFIC STEPS SUCH AS 1) AGREEING TO PICK UP "BOAT PEOPLE", 2) AGREEING TO KEEP REFUGEES ON A TEMPORARY BASIS FOR SIX MONTHS PENDING RESETTLEMENT (AS OPPOSED TO CURRENT PRACTICE OF ALLOWING REFUGEES ONLY 30 DAYS IN SOME COUNTRIES), 3) AGREEING THAT REFUGEES WHO ARE SPOUSES, CHILDREN, OR PARENTS OF RESIDENTS OF A PARTICULAR COUNTRY WILL BE ADMITTED TO THAT COUNTRY. PAOLINI SAID HE WAS PULLING THE "RULES" OUT OF THIN AIR, BUT THAT THIS KIND OF APPROACH WOULD BE FAVORED BY FRANCE. HE GREATLY FEARED THAT THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AND CERTAINLY ANY LARGER FORUM WOULD FAIL UNLESS

SOME SPECIFIC EFFORT ALONG THIS OR SIMILAR LINES WAS
TRIED.

5. TO BUTTRESS HIS ARGUMENTS PAOLINI NOTED THAT INTER-
EST IN CARING FOR REFUGEES WAS WANING IN SOME AREAS.
HE CITED RECENT EXAMPLE IN SINGAPORE IN WHICH 180
REFUGEES WERE BEING FORCED TO LEAVE 30 DAYS AFTER THEIR

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ARRIVAL. HE NOTED THAT FRANCE HAD AGREED TO TAKE THOSE
WHO HAD ASKED TO GO TO FRANCE BUT THAT AUSTRALIA HAD

REJECTED THOSE WISHING TO GO THERE AND THAT THE US HAD
"FAILED TO RESPOND IN TIME." HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT
THE US WOULD EVENTUALLY ADMIT THE US SHARE.
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6. EMBOFF ASKED PAOLINI IF GOF MIGHT BE WILLING TO
PARTICIPATE IN ANY PRE-MEETING CONSULTATIONS WITH A
VIEW TOWARD DEVELOPING THE "CONCRETE RESULTS" OR "SET
OF RULES" WHICH THE FRENCH WOULD LIKE TO SEE COME OUT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. PAOLINI, SPEAKING
PERSONALLY, SAID HE BELIEVED GOF WOULD BE RECEPTIVE
TO PARTICIPATING IN SUCH A "DRAFTING SESSION," THOUGH
HE NOTED THAT THERE REMAINS LITTLE TIME BEFORE THE
KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AND THAT MOST FRENCH EXPERTS ARE
CURRENTLY TRAVELING IN THE FAR EAST.

7. COMMENT: FRENCH ARE CLEARLY NOT CONVINCED THAT
INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS WILL PROVIDE MEANINGFUL RESULTS
AND THEY ARE GENUINELY FEARFUL THAT THEY WILL BE
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE LITTLE TO OFFER
AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR STIMULATING GREATER PARTICIPATION
IN THE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. NOTWITHSTANDING
THIS, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE FRENCH WOULD PARTICIPATE
IN THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AND ANY SUBSEQUENT INTER-
NATIONAL FORA, IF ONLY TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF BEING
NEGATIVE ON THE ISSUE. IF THE DEPARTMENT IS INTERESTED
IN MORE SUBSTANTIVE FRENCH PARTICIPATION WE WOULD RE-
COMMEND THE FOLLOWING:

A. POINTING OUT TO UNHCR THAT THEY SHOULD BRING
THE FRENCH MORE COMPLETELY INTO THE PRE-MEETING CON-
SULTATION PROCESS. (THE FRENCH NOSE IS CLEARLY OUT
OF JOINT OVER THE FAILURE OF UNHCR TO CONSULT ON THE
KUALA LUMPUR MEETING.)

B. GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE FRENCH
VIEW THAT A "SET OF RULES" BE SET AS A CONCRETE TARGET
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OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND OFFERING TO WORK
TOGETHER BILATERALLY OR IN A "SMALL GROUP" TO DRAFT
"RULES."

C. PROVIDING THE FRENCH WITH INDICATIONS OF ASIAN
AND DEVELOPED COUNTRY INTEREST IN THE INTERNATIONAL

CONFERENCE. PAOLINI, WE BELIEVE, REFLECTS THE FRENCH FEAR THAT AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM WILL BE USED BY OTHER NATIONS TO PRESSURE FRANCE INTO DOING MORE. (THE US RATIONALE, THAT THE REFUGEE FLOW HAS CHANGED QUALITATIVELY IN RECENT MONTHS AND THAT THE PROBLEM IS NOW MORE INTERNATIONAL IN NATURE, IS UNCONVINCING TO THE FRENCH AND THEY FEEL IT WILL BE UNCONVINCING TO OTHER POTENTIAL RECIPIENT NATIONS.

D. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL, EVEN SHOULD WE DECIDE THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO FOLLOW THE FRENCH APPROACH TO THE MEETING, TO HAVE ASAP THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AGENDA AND GOALS TO PASS TO PAOLINI. EMBASSY WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE UPDATE ON SINGAPORE REFUGEE PROBLEM MENTIONED BY PAOLINI WITH SOME INDICATION AS TO LIKELY US RESPONSE.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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